Horticulture is being planned for other States, particularly Andhra Pradesh, besides the North-Eastern States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Technology Mission for Development of Horticulture is being implementing in Northern Eastern States including Sikkim as a part of the package announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister for socio-economic development of these States. Similarly, a Technology Mission for development of horticulture in the State of Jammu and Kashmir is also being considered as a part of the package announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister for the State. As such this Ministry is not considering Technology Mission on Horticulture in other States/UTs, including Andhra Pradesh. However, States/UTs have been taking up Horticulture Development Programmes under Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Macro Management in Agriculture-Supplementation/ Complementation of States efforts through work plan" which provides them greater flexibility to take up the programmes as per their needs.

Agricultural Marketing Reforms

1054. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the inter-Ministerial Task Force on agricultural marketing reforms has, in its report submitted recently, recommended sweeping amendments in the marketing laws, to allow the private sector to operate the agricultural markets, legalise contract farming, etc.; and

(b) if so, the details of the major recommendations of the Task Force and the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The inter-Ministerial Task Force on Agricultural Marketing Reforms presented its Report to the Government on 28.6.2002. Major recommendations of the Task Force include:

i. Promotion of competitive agricultural market in private and cooperative sector, direct marketing and contract farming

programmes by amending the State Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation Acts and to provide Central assistance for the development of marketing infrastructure linked to such deregulation and reforms;

ii. Progressive dismantling of controls and regulations under the Essential Commodities Act to remove all restrictions on production, supply, storage and movement of, and trade and commerce in all agricultural commodities;

iii. Substantially step up flow on institutional credit to farmers for marketing of crops (pledge financing) and to enhance their holding capacity to obtain remunerative price for their produce;

iv. Expand availability of warehousing services in rural areas including by introducing negotiable warehousing receipt system for agricultural commodities;

v. Allow future trading in all agricultural commodities to improve price risk management and facilitate price discovery by amending the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952;

vi. To promote use of information technology in agricultural marketing to provide market led extension services to farmers and other market functionaries and to create facility of electronic trading to enable producers to directly transact business with distant buyers; and

vii. To re-orient training and extension systems to assit farming community to respond to emerging challenges in agricultural marketing and to create an ambiance of good marketing practices in the country.

The report of the inter-Ministerial Task Force is being examined in consultation with the State Government/Union Territories Administrations and concerned Central Government Department/Agencies.

Schemes to improve agricultural production in U.P.

1055. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Centrally sponsored programmes formulated and being implemented by Government for Uttar Pradesh, to increase